

# The Farewell Night Desana

by Acariya Maha Boowa Ñanasampanno

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In desiring that people should be good, no one can surpass the Lord Buddha. The Teaching which he gave the world was only so that everyone could be virtuous, good and happy. He did not want the world to be troubled and harmed, which results from wrong-doings due to ignorance of the way of conducting oneself. Therefore, building the Parami (Perfections) as far as that of a Buddha, who is full of Metta for all sentient beings of the world, is very difficult; very different from all other forms of Parami. Both the ability and Metta go along hand in hand.

If anyone had listened to the Teaching of the Lord Buddha, either from his own mouth or from the scriptures, and had belief in the principle of truth there presented, they would each then try to correct and improve themselves so as to be a good person. That is to say, any person so practising will be good; so with the first person that takes it up and likewise with the second person, etc. However many family members there are, when each receives the Teaching and training to be good, then that family is also good; and likewise in a village, town or country. Then, there is no need to ask any more about the peace and happiness of that country, for it must definitely follow from the goodness of all the people who do good.

But on the other hand, the various kinds of hardship and unhappiness also only arise out of wickedness. The extent of how many wicked people there are corresponds to the number of 'disturbers of society' (lit. splinters and thorns). The more there are, the more hellish the world becomes. It is then dark both in the night and daytime and in a constant state of agitation. There is no need to go and search after hell for it is being constructed right there in the Hearts of people, and then scattered and extended everywhere, turning everything into fire. This is wrong; not right or proper. If it were in accordance with the Buddha-Dhamma, these things would not occur. There would not be any need for judges, courts of appeal, or even the supreme court, for there would be no cases to settle, because each one has the intention to be virtuous and all try to listen to reason for virtue's sake. In talking to each other, whether amongst the young or old, man or woman, ordained or householder, there would be understanding. The reason for this deep understanding is due to the understanding of the good and bad that is within the Heart. There would only be the wish and intention to see in the way of reason, truth, reality, and virtue. It would be easy to listen and understand, and in conduct it would be always fair and equal with no need for secrecy.

The world, however, does not follow the Heart's wish. Wherever one goes, there are only complaints about Dukkha and troubles. The whole world is in a state of confusion and unrest even though everyone studies and searches for knowledge. But this knowledge does not bear any usefulness except only in using it to burn oneself, for these types of knowledge are not permeated with Dhamma. They do not have Dhamma as a support, brake, accelerator, or guide. Therefore, they just go on their own way (Yatha Kamma) without any limit or bounds.

When one thinks and investigates in this way one will come to see how important and valuable is the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha. If one were just to try and conduct oneself so as to be a good person, even though one was still not capable of teaching others to be good, this practice in the way of virtue alone will provide peacefulness wherever one goes and whatever the circumstances may be, one will be peaceful and happy which is the correct result from one's practice. Therefore, happiness arises with such people. There are different levels of such peacefulness and everyone is capable of experiencing the ordinary level if the intention and effort are put forth for these experiences to arise.

One should not overlook oneself, for this is a happy world, peaceful and worth living in, full of fun and joy. But further than this, for those who want to work at making happiness within the Heart rather than other kinds of happiness, they should put forth their full effort and exertion, gradually working towards their aim. Then the subtle type of happiness will arise.

Especially those who are interested in the way of Citta-Bhavana; if they take it as a battle, a state of war, then they are really in the front line. Among these people who are in the battlefield, if this is their aim and wish they cannot be weak. In doing everything they must always be vigilant. Then gradually they will turn to be people who are constantly mindful. If this is not the case they cannot be considered tough enough to be victorious in the war.

This toughness must depend on vigilant effort and Sati-Panna observing one's behaviour and seeing if it is going in the right way, or the wrong way, especially when the Citta is thinking in a way that accumulates unwholesomeness. For this is wrong and it becomes increasingly subtle and involved, so that it is necessary to depend on Sati-Panna as a guarding device, protecting vigilantly at all times. The 'stream of the Citta' and the various imaginings will then not go and gather

in those ideas, emotions and moods which are dangerous and poisonous to burn and torment oneself. Once the Citta has received proper care and nourishment it will gradually become peaceful, light, and happy, without fading into gloominess and dimness as it did before.

Therefore, all of you disciples (looksits) who have been training here for a sufficient time, please take the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha and establish it within your Heart. You should not think that you have left your teacher and monastery, for this departure is only an action - a physical transformation. The important thing is to reflect on the Lord Buddha's words:

"Whoever practises Dhamma in accordance with the way of Dhamma,

He is truly the one who gives Puja to the Tathagata."

That practice is the way of conducting oneself with Sati, Panna, Saddha, and Viriya (diligent effort), everywhere and in every posture with diligent discipline. Having conducted oneself well within the Heart with constant watchfulness is what is meant by the practice of Dhamma in accordance with the way of Dhamma and giving Puja to the Tathagata - the Lord Buddha - at all times.

The Lord Buddha continued:

"Whoever sees Dhamma, sees the Tathagata".

How does one see this Dhamma; know this Dhamma; and practise so as to see this Dhamma? It is just this way that we are practising now; especially important is the way of Citta-Bhavana. This is the way of practising Dhamma. What is seeing Dhamma if it is not the seeing of those obstructions existing right now within oneself? These, are what we should consider as our enemy! They are the first two Sacca Dhamma, being Dukkha and Samudaya. We investigate these things so as to understand their true nature which exists in every human being and animal without omitting any, excepting only the Arahant whom Samudaya cannot enter. The rest must possess it to some degree. This is what is called Sacca Dhamma. When one has understood and investigated the true nature of these things, it can be said that this is seeing Dhamma; then it is possible to abandon and uproot them, resulting in peacefulness and coolness within. And this abandoning, uprooting, and letting go of all these things, one calls "seeing Dhamma". It is a gradual seeing, level by level, step by step, until one finally sees the complete Tathagata.

In speaking of the levels of attainment: Those who have attained to the Sotapatti-Magga and -Phala can be said to have seen the Lord Buddha at one level, with the Heart penetrating into the stream of Dhamma. It is the beginning of seeing the Lord Buddha. Like as if one were to stand in a field, one would see the Lord in the distance. The Sakadagami would see the Lord Buddha as being closer; Anagami closer and closer until finally with the Arahatta-Phala one would then see the Lord Buddha completely. And the Dhamma for these various attainments in the way of practice is with everyone of us. The constant taking up of the practice can be said to be following the Tathagata and looking at the Tathagata.

With the practice one sees the Tathagata. One sees the Tathagata by way of the cause, which is the practice, and by way of the result, which is successively experiencing the things one should experience. This is like the Lord Buddha who had truly seen and known, who had successively experienced them and passed beyond them. Therefore, be it the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, or Sangha, they are never apart from the Heart of one who practices following Dhamma and who by virtue of their practice give Puja to the Tathagata, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. This is the genuine and true Puja. This is the way of having a continuous audience with the Lord Buddha - a way of diligent effort.

Departing and going away is only an action, a condition. There is a departing right here, for example; after sitting here one departs to sit over there; from there one returns to sit here. There is a constant departing. As far as departing is concerned, one should not think that one departs from here, from there, from this or that town, this or that house or place. These are all departures from either far or near. There is continual departing in the world of Aniccam. It is all impermanent, constantly changing. These things we can reflect on so that they can become a lesson of Dhamma using the Ti-lakkhana, which is the way of all those who truly know and see.

It is necessary to depend on the principle of the Ti-lakkhana as the way. When we are here we cultivate Dhamma; when we are there we cultivate Dhamma, for the purpose of relinquishing, for the eradication of the Kilesa, for the extinguishing of all Dukkha that exists within the Heart. Wherever we are we cultivate for the purpose of uprooting and releasing. It is possible to uproot and release by way of such cultivation. The place does not matter because what is important is only the practice of uprooting and releasing.

The Lord Buddha therefore taught the Savakas: "Go Bhikkhus, all of you seek secluded places! Be firm like warriors in those places! This is the way to have audience with the Tathagata all the time. It is not necessary for all of you to gather round the Tathagata here in order to have an audience. This is not the way! But rather, whoever has Sati, and is diligent, in all postures, is thus giving Puja and having audience with the Tathagata there and then, but sitting here carelessly (Pamada) is not the way to meet the Tathagata, nor to see or have audience with the Tathagata. The Tathagata does not regard the coming here and going away as having an audience with or taking leave of the Tathagata. The Tathagata considers that diligence in practice to eradicate the Kilesa from the Heart, whether little or much, as gradually having an audience with the Tathagata."

This is the gradual seeing of the Tathagata. It is the main point in the Teaching whereby the Lord Buddha taught his followers to practise with diligent effort in gradually and successively uprooting the Kilesa, which are the enemies within the Heart, until they all are made to vanish. Then they would all see where the Tathagata really is, without having to look at the Tathagata with dim and blurry eyes, lacking in Sati. All there is to do is to completely get rid of all those things which are the enemies of the heart. Then they can take that 'nature' and compare it with the Tathagata to see if there is any difference. Undoubtedly, there is none, for all purified 'nature' is the same: Listen! The essence of the Lord Buddha's Teaching is just like this.

The training of one's Heart and the behaviour to be good and virtuous is the way of accumulating happiness. When there is successive growth and development within the Heart the result is just happiness. When there is no happiness or an incomplete happiness, this is because of those things which obstruct the Heart, being nothing else but the Kilesas themselves.

Only the Kilesas can obstruct and pierce the Hearts of all sentient beings; preventing them from experiencing happiness and satisfaction. The Dukkha and hardship, both internally and externally, is mostly caused by the Kilesa, and nothing else. For example, when there is illness in the body, the Kilesa will also complain, that it is painful here, or there; causing restlessness and worry to arise within the Heart. And this adds another kind of Dukkha of the Heart which arises with bodily illness. If it is just an ordinary bodily illness, both the Lord Buddha and Savaka could also experience it, for the nature of this Khandha falls under the law of Sammuti, which is the Ti-lakkhana. Whoever has Khandha and Dhatu cannot go beyond this law. When it is Sammuti, it must fall within the law of nature; within the natural principle there must necessarily be change as a norm. However, the Heart does not waver because it totally understands the nature of these things, without any deficiencies.

But it is not like this with us. When there arises bodily Dukkha, whether much or little, there is a tendency for the Heart to accumulate additional Dukkha; the amount either great or small is beyond measure. Sometimes the Dukkha within the Heart becomes greater than that of the body. This is what is meant by being infiltrated by the Kilesa in every possible way when we are absent-minded and careless. When there is no Sati-Panna to know what the Kilesa are up to, the Kilesa can penetrate in every possible way, regardless of time, place, or posture. It can happen any time. All that is necessary is that the Citta acts without Sati-Panna as the controlling factor. Then it is as if the Citta becomes the Kilesa's servant, unknowingly helping them. How then can the lesson of Dhamma arise? It can only go the way of the Kilesa and they will keep on gradually increasing.

Therefore, it is necessary to throw the full force of our Sati-Panna, Saddha and Viriya to keep up with the events happening within the Heart. Studying the Dhatu and Khandha can make one a noble person; any other kind of study will not lead one to satisfaction. There will still be hunger as is normal in the way of the world. But when one has studied the Dhatu Khandha and the Heart to completion, the hunger will also be finished. One will be fully and completely satisfied.

At present we are still deficient in the knowledge of the Khandha and the application of such knowledge in one's practice. This knowledge is Sati-Panna, the penetrative insight into the true nature of the Dhatu Khandha as to what they really are according to the principle of truth. It is the analysis of separating the true from the false. When the study is not complete or understood, there results endless confusion and turmoil within the Dhatu Khandha and the Citta. There is no other confusion and agitation more than that in the Dhatu Khandha and the Heart, where all sorts of problems are constantly occurring, so long as they are not cleared up. Therefore, it is the studying at this place, the knowing at this place, that is the way to clear up these problems which are so greatly entangled, with Sati-Panna being the judge in successively examining and deciding in each case.

Alright! Let's study to completion! What is there in the Dhatu Khandha? As has always been said, the Rupa Khandha is just this very body, without any exception. Altogether this comprises Rupa Khandha, being this, our very body. Vedana Khandha is that of Dukkha, Sukha, and neutral feeling, that arise within the body and Heart. This is called Vedana Khandha. Sanna Khandha is memory, assumed knowledge of various things. This is called Sanna Khandha. Sankhara Khandha is the creative ability of the Heart, i.e. thinking about virtue, or wickedness; thinking about past or future, without limit. This is called Sankhara Khandha. They are groups or heaps. Vinnana Khandha acknowledges forms, sounds, smells, tastes, or tactile objects when they come into contact with the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body respectively, and reports them to the Heart to acknowledge at the moment when those things come into contact, then they vanish going the way of those things which pass by. This is called Vinnana Khandha, being the Vinnana of the five Khandha.

The Vinnana of the five Khandhas is different from the Patisandhi-Vinnana. Patisandhi-Vinnana refers to Mano, or specifically the Citta. It is the Citta that is about to enter into Patisandhi-Vinnana, taking birth in various forms of existences. This is called Patisandhi-Vinnana which is specifically the Heart. With regard to the Vinnana of the five Khandhas, it arises and ceases with the things that come into contact with it; when these things come into contact, and then pass away, the Vinnana correspondingly also passes away. That is, the acknowledgement ceases along with the passing away of those things. However, the Patisandhi-Vinnana refers to the Heart which possesses the faculty of knowing, alone and by itself. Even if there is nothing to come into contact with it, this one does not cease.

When studying the five Khandhas, do it thoroughly until you understand. What is not yet understood should be studied over and over again. Keep on digging and analysing until you understand. This is the field of work for one who would eradicate the Kilesa, Tanha, and Asava from the Heart. This is the demolishing of the 'Cycle of Vatta'; which is the revolving of the Citta that goes on taking birth in various forms of existence, endlessly wandering and reserving places

in the cemetery. Even before death it has already made its reservation there. This is due to delusion; being ignorant of the true nature of the Khandha. When it is like this, there is attachment to the Khandha, even when it is still in possession of the Khandha. It is not enough. It has to go on continually attaching itself and losing itself in delusion, without ever coming to an end. This is the case if Panna is not being applied to analyse and investigate so as to really know and be capable of cutting them off. Therefore, one should take up the study of the Dhatu Khandha; the Rupa Khandha; for this is the essence of the Sacca Dhamma, the essence of the Four Satipatthana. These are all the same; they are synonymous and can all be used in place of one another.

When we investigate any of these objects, we find that they are all concerned with the essence of the Sacca Dhamma and the essence of the Four Satipatthana. Normally, when there is no illness or disease, the body is simply the body as it is; and similarly when there is illness and disease, the body is still simply the body; Rupa is just still Rupa. This abnormality just follows the natural course of the Dhatu Khandha. The Dukkha Vedana that arises due to this abnormality does not remain for long and one should just let the Citta know it for what it is. This is the way to study the Khandha. Do not be alarmed or frightened, or saddened with them, for these things are the normal and natural occurrences of Sammuti. They must successively change; there are subtle changes and gross changes. They change in accordance with their nature - at every period, every second; but one can say that even the second is too long a time, rather every instant or all the time. They just change, constantly changing. There is no pause, no taking time off for rest and sleep like animals and people do.

As for Dukkha, that also manifests itself constantly. It never stops for sleep or rest. People take time off for rest, sleep, and to recuperate so as to relax and be comfortable, but not so with the Sacca Dhamma and the Ti-lakkhana. They never stop; they never ease off with anybody. They go on according to their course both day and night; standing, walking, sitting, and lying down. Everything by its very condition must revolve. This body too, revolves; that is, its conditions change. After having sat down for a little while there is pain. Is this change or not? If it is not change then why does pain arise? This pain is called Dukkha Vedana. It is a condition that arises and we become aware of it. This is one type of Sacca Dhamma - investigate it so as to see it as it really is. When the time comes we cannot depend on anyone else. To think that one can depend on this or that person is a misunderstanding, which can only drain one's mental energy until one is discouraged and disheartened in the helping of oneself. This is a wrong understanding or a wrong seeing by the Citta, with the Kilesas whispering to it and constantly deceiving it, both in normal times and in times of sickness and emergency, cutting the ground from under one's feet by means of its trickery.

When the time is really drawing near it is like a boxer in the ring. Before climbing into the ring the trainer can teach and instruct, but once in the ring there is no way to teach anything more. Right or wrong; good or bad; alive or dead - one has to rely on oneself and must help oneself to one's fullest capability. Whatever boxing techniques there are cannot be taught at this time. The time of going into battle, is that of the final moment when the Khandha and the Citta are going their separate ways, and is the time of breaking up. It is like having crows and vultures landing on the branches of a tree; when they land they hardly shake the branches at all, but when they fly away they shake the branches until the whole tree vibrates. If there are any dead branches some of them will break.

At the time when the Dhatu Khandha are leaving us, how hard will it shake us? With what are we going to stand up to this shaking - if it isn't with Sati-Panna? Without them we will definitely not be able to endure and will lose our balance and control. Therefore, we must fight to the end with the fullest capacity of our Sati-Panna in every way. There is no need to consider that we will collapse in the fight. The investigation of the Dhatu Khandha so as to see their true nature is for the purpose of gaining release and not to destroy them. This is the way to help oneself, with one's full strength and ability at the time of this emergency, and it also follows the way of the sages and wise men. When the time of necessity really comes there will only be Dukkha Vedana very clearly manifesting itself; every part and piece throughout the body will appear as a mass of fire. Internally the body will be like a red-hot and glaring furnace. Then what are we going to do?

We must use Sati-Panna to sound out and see the Dukkha; to see clearly that heat with Panna. Then to turn to see our Heart - is that also red-hot as well? Or is it only the Dhatu Khandha that are heated? If one possesses Sati-Panna, then the Heart will not be moved. It will be cool within the mass of fire which is the Dhatu Khandha that is burning with the fire of Dukkha. This is the way of those who practise. This is the way of self-help. One should analyse in this way. But one should not expect to depend on anyone else during that time.

This is entering the fighting ring. Once one is determined to fight, then fight with reason and to one's fullest strength. Let it be! Live or die! It doesn't matter who will carry one out of the ring. It is a fight to the end with one's maximum capacity of Panna. Do not fight blindly - without concern; nor like a dummy allowing the other to hit blow after blow without warding off or returning the punch. This is useless! We must energetically fight to win putting our lives at stake. If we shall die then so be it - but we will not fight haphazardly for lack of that most up-to-date and advanced weapon - Sati-Panna.

Battling with Vedana means investigating so as to see its true nature. Do not force it to disappear; if there is coercion it is going against the course of nature. The only way is to investigate so as to see it as it really is and let it disappear of itself. If it does not disappear one will understand the nature of Vedana and will not cling to it. Rupa is Rupa; do not take anything so as to contradict this and make it something else. Rupa is Rupa; body is body - it is just body, just Rupa. Vedana is just Vedana, be it Sukha, Dukkha, or neutral - it is just Vedana.

Who is the one that knows the body, knows Vedana - Sukha, Dukkha, or neutral - if it is not the Heart? The Heart is not these Dhamma. Separate them apart so as to see clearly with Panna. This is the correct way of investigating Sacca

Dhamma and one will not waver even if the body does not last. Alright! Let's face the battle; let's see what will disappear first and be last to vanish, because we have confidence in Sati-Panna and the truth. And the truth is that the Heart is not the one that dies. The Heart is just the one that acknowledges everything. Alright! Whatever is impermanent, let it go. The body is impermanent; alright, let it break up. Vedana is impermanent; alright, let it melt away. Whatever is impermanent, let it all dissolve. Whatever is permanent will last and be firm. And what is that which remains? What else other than the 'one who knows', which is the Heart. There! It's the 'one who knows' standing out distinctly all the time.

Once having trained oneself in the way of Sati-Panna until becoming adept, the result will definitely be like this. But if one is deficient in Sati-Panna the Heart will become discouraged and weak. All sorts of Dukkha will then converge into the Heart because it is the Heart itself that accumulates Dukkha due to its own stupidity. Therefore, weakness is not the path that leads one away from all harm and danger, but rather it is diligence and hard work, being a warrior with Sati-Panna. Nothing else can bring victory; can make one outstanding; good and virtuous; impressive; that can bring bravery and fearlessness to arise within the Heart. Please consider it in this way.

Suppose that we live at home without a teacher or instructor - what teaching did the teacher previously give for such time as we would be alone without a teacher? That is the Teacher, that is the Tathagata, that is the Dhamma. We are with the Dhamma, with the Lord Buddha, and with the Sangha at all times by means of the Teaching that we use to train and conduct ourselves. These all represent our teachers. We are not without a teacher or an instructor. We live with a refuge in having Sati-Panna, Saddha, Viriya fighting to the end against those things which are our enemies. How can we say we are without a teacher - we live with our teacher! When we know we must know like one who has a teacher. This is the way to conduct oneself. There is no loneliness, no wavering. There is only firmness and steadfastness in the truth of Dhamma. That which the teacher has instructed should be constantly adhered to as a guide within one's Heart. Wherever we are we can say that we are with a teacher, with an instructor, with the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, because the real Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha are within the Citta. It is only the Citta that can accommodate the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha or the whole essence of Dhamma. It is only the Citta that can be with the Lord Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha - not anything else. The body does not know - how then can it know about the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha? Vedana does not know; Sanna is just memory that after recollection just disappears without trace; Sankhara imagines and then vanishes. How can there be any essence in them sufficient to accommodate the Lord Buddha? The one who truly accommodates, who really understands the Lord Buddha and who is truly the real Buddha is just this Citta.

Therefore, investigate the Citta to the utmost. Do not be weak and discouraged! In any case, everyone of us will have to enter into the battle. It is something that none of us can avoid. All we can do is to help ourselves, and it is very certain that we will have to help ourselves. When the time of necessity comes, it will be impossible for anyone else to help; regardless of who they are, whether father or mother, sons or daughters, husband or wife, they can only watch with affection, sympathy, and yearning. They will long to help but when the time comes it is beyond their power. The only thing that can help us transcend Dukkha and torment, to be free from all bondage is Sati-Panna and our own effort. There is nothing else. Therefore, we have to be strict with ourselves, be firm at Heart even if the body is nearing its end. And we should understand about these things from this moment on! Then we will not lose control regardless of how the Khandha react, for they cannot go beyond death. No matter whether they manifest themselves, much or little, they then just end in death.

So the 'one who knows' knows till death, at which time the Dhatu Khandha all dissolve and the 'one who knows' is rid of all problems, all responsibilities, and there is no need for any further investigation. Let's get down to the crux of the matter! Right to the essence of truth and reason! Then we will arrive at the real and genuine Dhamma within the Heart.

This Dhamma presentation is quite appropriate; may it now come to an end.

(Source: Kammatthana – The basis of practice.)

Source : <http://www.vipassana.com>